THE UNITED NATIONS FOR YOUTH:

PARTICIPATION, DEVELOPMENT, PEACE

At the United Nations, youth is defined as persons between the ages of 15 and 24. The number of young people in the world rose from 460 million in 1950 to 1 billion in 1990, and it is projected to increase to 1.4 billion by 2025. Many of the problems affecting young people result from the lack of adequate policies to deal with the continuous growth of the youth population.

INTERNATIONAL YOUTH YEAR (IYY)

Youth and youth-related issues have always been a concern of the United Nations. That concern led the United Nations and the world community to observe in 1985 the International Youth Year: Participation, Development, Peace. The Year sought:

To enhance awareness of the needs and aspirations of youth;

To make youth activities an integral part of social and economic development;

To enhance youth participation in society; and

To promote among youth the ideals of peace, mutual respect and understanding among people.

IYY FOLLOW-UP

A highlight of the Year was the endorsement by the United Nations General Assembly—acting as the United Nations World Conference for the International Youth Year—of Guidelines for further planning and suitable follow-up in the field of youth. The Guidelines suggest to countries how to develop and carry out youth policies and programmes, according to each country's needs and situation. They include recommendations for national, regional and international action.

In 1995, the tenth anniversary of the Year will be the occasion for launching global activities seeking to strengthen youth-related concerns in development activities, in cooperation with the many organizations dealing with youth issues.

INTER-AGENCY COOPERATION

To ensure co-operation among the various bodies and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, the Informal Inter-Agency Working Group at the Technical Level on Youth was created in 1981. The Group is made up of representatives of various offices responsible for youth programmes throughout the United Nations system, that is:

CSDHA	Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs;
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund;
ILO	International Labour Organisation;
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations;
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization;
WHO	World Health Organization; and
UNV	United Nations Volunteers programme.

Thanks to inter-agency coordination, the United Nations system has come together on youth issues and developed programmes, means and ideas for joint action. The United Nations bodies have strengthened regular youth programme activities, helped develop new ones, encouraged the setting up of focal points on youth, started technical assistance projects in the field, and expanded information and promotion.

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YOUTH ACTIVITIES IN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

CSDHA

Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs

The focal point for youth matters is the Vienna-based Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs. One of its main tasks is to assist Governments in drafting and carrying out national youth policies and programmes as part of national development strategies. The Centre among other things:

Coordinates cooperative action on youth issues in the United Nations system;

Promotes the creation and strengthening of national bodies coordinating youth programmes, and establishes close working relations with them;

Organizes and/or participates in international meetings to promote the development and implementation of integrated national youth policies and programmes;

Administers the United Nations Youth Fund, which supports national and regional youth activities, particularly in developing countries;

Carries out global research and analysis of youth issues, and encourages action-oriented research;

Undertakes information and promotional activities, such as publicizing the Guidelines, preparing directories on youth organizations and research institutes, and producing the *Youth Information Bulletin* and the newsletter *IYY Follow-up*; and

Seeks to strengthen communication between the United Nations system and youth and youth organizations, and to set up a partnership with non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

UNICEF

United Nations Children's Fund

Mandated to promote the development and well-being of children, UNICEF has a long-standing commitment to youth. Many of its programmes deal with the needs of youth and young women. The Fund:

Fosters youth services to children and other youths;

Encourages youth participation in health promotion activities;

Carries out programmes benefiting youth, such as non-formal education, income-generating and training activities for street children, and assistance to children and youth in especially difficult circumstances, in particular those exploited at work or victims of man-made disasters;

Supports youth organizations in promoting and implementing the Convention on the Rights of the Child; and

Cooperates with a Youth NGO Consultative Group made up of 18 International Youth NGO networks to promote a Youth NGO World Initiative for Children.

ILO

ILO's youth-related activities are an integral part of its major objective to promote full, productive and freely chosen employment, to foster equality of opportunity and treatment and to improve the conditions and the environment of labour. The means to reach this objective include the development and implementation of international labour standards, technical cooperation activities, national and international conferences and seminars, advisory services and research.

International labour standards aim at protecting young workers and at promoting their equality of opportunity and treatment.

Advisory services and technical cooperation activities assist Governments in developing labour market and employment policies, labour market information systems, employment-generating programmes and policies promoting the occupational safety and health of young workers.

Technical cooperation projects also provide training for young people, including entrepreneurship development, and promote young women's access to employment.

Research covers a variety of areas including labour market policies relating to youth unemployment, employment and labour conditions in the informal sector, the impact of technologies on employment, social security and social welfare services and the status of young women workers, especially in the rural sector.

FAO

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

As the leading international agency for food, agriculture and rural development, FAO includes in its work with Governments and NGOs programmes to help prepare rural youth and young farmers to become responsible, productive citizens. FAO encourages the development of appropriate skills, knowledge and attitudes through formal and non-formal educational activities and projects. Young people are an important part of FAO's work with smallholders and fishermen in promoting sustainable agricultural production systems based on the needs of rural families. The agency among other things:

Works with Governments to develop national policy and programmes for rural youth and young farmers;

Provides technical assistance for agricultural and rural non-formal educational and training programmes;

Sponsors national and international seminars on rural youth work;

Publishes a newsletter and maintains a communication network among youth leaders and those responsible for developing programmes for rural youth;

Supports leadership development through membership and participation in rural youth organizations;

Assists in developing income-generating projects as a part of youth group and individual activities; and

Encourages rural young people to discuss the effects of rapid population growth as a part of their programme of work.

WHO

The WHO adolescent health programme seeks to maintain and promote the health of young people world-wide. The programme seeks:

To obtain information and impart it to adolescents and influential adults;

To train adolescents and adults in the skills needed to provide health care and to foster healthy behaviour;

To facilitate policy and legislation that better meet adolescent health needs; and

To improve provision of information, guidance and services seeking to promote health, prevent problems and treat and rehabilitate those in need.

Within the framework of its programme, WHO supports the development of innovative methodologies in health planning and evaluation, research, training and information; provides technical and financial support to Governments, NGOs, universities and professionals; and organizes technical meetings.

WHO also disseminates information on adolescent health, the abuse of tobacco, alcohol and other drugs, nutrition, accidents and injuries, reproductive health, sexually transmitted diseases, HIV infection leading to AIDS, health education and health promotion.

UNESCO

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

The UNESCO youth programme focuses on educational, social and cultural activities, seeking to enhance the status of young people in society and mobilize them in national development.

In education, young people are the principal beneficiaries of educational opportunities designed to meet their basic learning needs and are the main recipients of literacy teaching and job training. Other activities aim at preventing drug abuse and AIDS, and at promoting physical education and ethics in sports.

In science, UNESCO promotes scientific and technological culture and environmental awareness, to enable young people to cope with technological advances and the evolution of knowledge.

In culture and communication, it encourages young people to take part in the cultural life of society, for instance in preserving their cultural heritage, and to develop a critical appreciation of print and audio-visual media.

In the social and human sciences, UNESCO investigates the social exclusion of young people, seeking to identify factors that favour greater youth participation in society, and assists in formulating national youth policies and programmes.

UNESCO promotes voluntary service to involve young people more actively in development and in work for the preservation of cultural heritage.

It is strengthening youth cultural exchange programmes between East and West and between North and South, to foster peace and international understanding through direct knowledge of other cultures and lifestyles.

A new "Mobilizing Project" seeks to create an international youth information service, and to strengthen networks of youth institutions, organizations and research centres.

UNV

United Nations Volunteers programme

United Nations Volunteers work in projects dealing with vocational training, self-employment promotion, leadership training and youth workers training—especially pilot projects seeking to increase the participation of youth in development activities.

Other UNV projects help devise and carry out innovative youth programmes, promote self-help, provide advisory services, and seek to strengthen organizations promoting youth activities for development. The UNV programme is administered by the United Nations Development Programme.

For further information, please co

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